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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS



IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

IS THE ROUTINE EXHIBITION OF THE PRE-OPERATIVE PURGE DEFENSIBLE?—The *New York Medical Journal*, in an extract from the *American Journal of Obstetrics*, says: Walker answers this question by stating that purgatives can do harm and should only be given when indications are clear. He thinks the routine methods now in common use should be abandoned and that the laity should be taught the evils of the purgative habit, by precept and example. He thinks that purging all patients as a preliminary to surgical operations is both unnecessary and injurious, as they are thus made uncomfortable, and weakened, while germ activity in the intestines is stimulated, thus increasing the possibility of infection. There is also a greater tendency to post-operative tympanites. A suitable diet for twenty-four hours or more, and fasting for twelve hours before operation, puts the intestine in the best possible condition for such an experience, unless obstructive lesions are present and in such an event purgatives are worse than useless. In rare cases of mild fecal stasis a purgative several days before operation, followed by enemata, may be of service.

A NOTE ON POSTPARTUM HEMORRHAGE, WITH TWO QUICK WAYS OF MEETING IT.—The following from the same source is of interest: Stewart's conclusions are the following: 1. This term should only apply to the loss of 1000 c.c. of blood after delivery with blanching of lips, air hunger, and pronounced pulse symptoms. 2. A good preventive is to allow the mother to rest undisturbed forty-five minutes after delivery of the child. 3. Hemorrhage several hours after delivery may be checked by the administration of an ounce of vinegar by mouth. Should this be ineffective a hypodermic injection of a similar quantity into the uterine wall will be indicated. 4. A Rose bandage will prevent recurrence of bleeding after it has once been checked. 5. Threatening or existing hemorrhage at the completion of labor may be forestalled or checked by the application of chloroform to the interior of the uterus. This is much preferable to the preparations of iron.

HUMAN HAIR SUTURES.—In the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, F. B. Guthrie and C. C. Guthrie suggest the use of human hair for sutures for vascular anastomoses. Light brown hairs of medium fineness, about eight inches long, were tested as to tensile strength and found to be stronger than the silk previously employed. Experiments of reuniting the severed carotid and the carotid and jugular veins in dogs were successful, the healing being rapid.

ACETONE ALCOHOL AS A DISINFECTANT.—The *New York Medical Journal*, quoting from a German medical contemporary says: Von Herff declares that equal parts of acetone and alcohol are the best disinfectant known for the skin and the operative field. For the past two years he has used it exclusively, as described below, without any previous preparation such as sublimate dressings or scrubbing with soap and water, even about the vulva. The dry skin is washed for about five minutes with the acetone alcohol solution with a piece of flannel. The excess is sponged off and a protective dressing placed about the operative area. In vaginal operations, the vagina is washed out with a 3 per cent. solution of iodine in alcohol, because the vaginal epithelium does not bear rubbing well and because it contains no fatty substances to be dissolved. In the year 1908 he had but two mild infections of the wound. Von Herff says that the bacteriological as well as the clinical test is so perfect, and the method is so simple, that he cordially recommends it.

PURE POLONIUM ISOLATED.—The announcement is made from Berlin by Professor Lipmann that Madame Curie, of Paris, the discoverer of radium, has isolated polonium, a new element possessing a radio-activity superior to that of radium. This is reported as being the pure element which Madame Curie had formerly obtained in an impure state, and given the same name. It is reported to have four hundred times the radio-active power of radium.

PHYSIOLOGICAL DECREASE OF WEIGHT IN INFANTS.—The *New York Medical Journal* says: Hirsch considers that the decrease in weight observed in infants is only apparent and is due in great part to the loss of the meconium, slightly to the breaking down of albumin, and the evaporation of water through the skin. With sufficient nutriment the weight at birth is regained on the eighth day, if the child is healthy.

TREATMENT OF RINGWORM.—The *Medical Record* has the following from the *British Medical Journal*: E. L. Jenkins says that the use of the X-ray is in the country often unavailable or impracticable. In dealing with pediculosis in his hospital wards he always uses the essential oil of sassafras, which he regards as a specific. When both pediculosis and ringworm existed in the same scalp, the latter disease also appeared benefited. This led him to try the remedy for ringworm alone. So far the results have been most effective. The hair is cut closely around in order to identify the patches, and the oil is applied twice a day by means of a camel's-hair brush. This treatment is continued a few weeks or so, as the case may indicate. No irritation is produced, and the application is pleasant to use. Not only is the spread of the affection prevented, but the fungus is destroyed with certainty in two or three weeks, this certainty being recognized by the development of fine new hairs.

CURRENT LITERATURE OF INTEREST TO NURSES

Medical Record, February 5, "Local Anæsthesia in General Surgery," W. S. Schley, M.D.; February 12, "Six Cases of Pneumonia in the Aged, Treated with Pneumococcus Vaccine," Henry A. Craig, M.D.; February 26, "Treatment of Carcinoma with the Body Fluids of a Recovered Case." *New York Medical Journal*, February 5, "Enuresis," F. L. Wachenheim; February 19, "Some Dietetic Points in the Home Treatment of Tuberculosis," Howard S. Anders, M.D. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, February 19, "Alcohol as a Poison," T. D. Crothers, M.D.; "Migraine," Sidney Kuh, M.D.; "Chilblains," "Frostbite;" February 26, "Infant Mortality," L. Emmett Holt, M.D., "Plea for the Establishment of an American Association for the Prevention of Social Disease," Lawrence Litchfield, M.D., "Pneumonia;" March 5, "Nitrous Oxide Oxygen Anæsthesia by the Method of Re-breathing," Willis D. Gatch, M.D. *The Survey*, February 19, "Garden Plots for Institution Inmates," Bolton Hall, "State Care of Inebriates," three papers by Bailey B. Burritt, William Mabon, M.D., and Albert Warren Ferris, M.D., "Ready-Made Lectures on Tuberculosis," Frank H. Mann, "The Red Cross at the Cherry Mine"; February 26, "Back Strain and Foot Strain," Harlan P. Cole, M.D.; March 5, Read the whole number; excellent articles on venereal diseases, fresh air schools, tuberculosis tenements, infant mortality, and alcoholism. *McClure's Magazine*, March, "The New Anæsthetic—Stovaine," Burton J. Hendrick.